

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MELBOU 00281 170715Z

16

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-07 SIL-01 LAB-04

COME-00 /095 W

----- 082750

R 170532Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2642

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL PERTH BY POUCH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMEBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L 0281

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: SHIFT INPUBLIC SUPPORT FAVORS LABOR GOVERNMENT

1. MELBOURNE NEWSPAPER "THE AGE" FOR MARCH 12 CARRIES EDITORIAL
PAGE COMMENTARY BY POLITICAL OBSERVER CREIGHTON BURNS,
HEADLINED "LABOR MAKES A COMEBACK". BURNS OPENS PIECE BY
STATING "WHITLAM GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SINGULAR POLITICAL
RECOVERY SINCE LAST MONTHS OF 1974".

2. NOTING OPINION POLLS SHOW RECENT GAINS OF 4 PER CENT PLUS FOR
LABOR, BURNS' CONJECTURE THAT WITH ANOTHER 5 OR 6 MONTHS IN
OFFICE, AND WITH A CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN POSITON "LABOR
MUST HAVE REASONABLY GOOD CHANCE OF MAKING UP SIX OR SO
PERCENTAGE POINTS IT STILL NEEDS TO HOLD PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MELBOU 00281 170715Z

MAJORITY".

3. BURNS THEN DETAILS AS "THINGS WORKING FOR WHITLAM GOVERNMENT": FACT THAT UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEGUN TO FALL; HOUSING LOANS ARE BOOMING; BANK DEPOSITS ARE AT RECORD LEVEL; PUBLIC CONFDENCE, IN TERMS OF DECLARED OPTIMISM IN FUTURE OF ECONOMY, IS RISING. COLUMNIST THE NOTES THAT "CONSERVATIVE ECONOMISTS ARE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE IN POSSIBILITY OF 10 PER CENT GROWTH RATE DURING YEAR"; ALSO, "BUSINESSMEN ARE BEGINNING TO PREDICT THAT THIRD QUARTER WILL BE BETTER THAN SECOND".

4. AMONG THINGS LACKING FOR PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT OF VIABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY, BURNS NOTES THAT "COURAGE IS MISSING IN PRIVATE SECTOR. MUCH OF ENTERPRISE SEEMS TO HAVE GONE OUT OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE". COLUMNIST CONTINUES IN SAME VEIN TO CRITICIZE LACK OF READINESS BY AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSMEN "WHO NO LONGER SEEM TO HAVE COURAGE TO TAKE RISK" NOW THAT THEY ARE NOT COMPLETELY PROTECTED BY GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES OR SUBSIDIES AS IN PAST. BURNS BLAMES THIS IN PART ON INABILITY OF AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS TO ENSURE TRADE UNION RESTRAINT IN FUTURE WAGE DEMANDS.

5. BURNS REGARDS PRESENT STATE OF OPPOSITION AS "DILAPIDATED" AND POINTS TO "CONTEMPTUOUS CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH MR. WHITLAM NOW CONFRONTS OPPOSITION". BURNS CLOSES ON SPECULATION THAT THE COUNTRY "IS FINALLY THROUGH TRAUMA PRODUCED BY CLEAR-CUT POLITICAL CHANGE AFTER 23 YEARS OF APPARENT STABILITY". HE RECKONS THAT THERE IS ONLY THIN POSSIBILITY OF ELECTION THIS YEAR IF ALL FOREGOINGIS TRUE.

6. COMMENT: IN OPINION OF CONGEN AND LABATT, BURNS SEEMS TO REFLECT GROWING CONSENSUS THAT LABOR MAY NOT AFTER ALL BE FORCED TO YET ANOTHER ELECTION SOON. DESPITE PRESSURE FOR A NEW ELECTION FORCED BY LIBERAL COUNTRY PARTY OPPOSITION SENATORS AGAIN WITHHOLDING SUPPLY FROM GOVERNMENT, OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN STATE IN BENDIGO MARCH 16 THAT OPPOSITION WILL NOT FORCE NEW ELECTION. HIS RIVAL FOR LIBERAL LEADERSHIP, MALCOLM FRASER, HAS ALREADY TOLD US HE WOULD NOT FAVOR FORCING EARLY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MELBOU 00281 170715Z

ELECTION (SEE MELBOURNE MEMCON MARCH 11). ALSO IN PAST FEW DAYS COUNTRY PARTY LEADER DOUG ANTHONY HAS MOVED AWAY FROM AGGESSIVE INSISTENCE OF EARLY ELECTION AND NOW SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND HIS FAVORITE HOBBY-HORSE, OPPOSITION TO LABOR GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME, MAY NOT BE NAG ON WHICH OPPOSITION CAN RIDE BACK TO POWER. CURRENT STRUGGLE FOR LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION MUST BE DEFINITELY RESOLVED BEFORE LIBERAL/COUNTRY COALITION CAN HAVE ANY

REAL HOPE OF PROVIDING CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO WHITLAM
POLITICAL CIRCLES IN VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA,
BOTH LABOR AND OPPOSITION, FEEL THAT DESPITE STEADY
STREAM OF GAFFES, SCANDALS, AND POLICY REVERSALS SINCE LAST
OCTOBER, WHITLAM GOVERNMENT LARGELY ESCAPED DAMAGE BECAUSE
OF OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP'S INABILITY TO EXPLOIT GOVERNMENT
WEAKNESSES.
BRAND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TEXT ON MICROFILM ONLY, POLITICAL PARTIES, POPULAR SUPPORT, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MELBOU00281
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: ACCESSION #D750092-0301 REMOVED FROM SYSTEM, TEXT UPGRADED PER MEMO P900052-0210
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P900052-0215, D750092-0301
From: MELBOURNE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750344/aaaabntj.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHIFT INPUBLIC SUPPORT FAVORS LABOR GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, AS, ILAB
To: STATE BRISBANE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006